

# M E R C A T O R :

O R,

## Commerce Retrieved,

B E I N G

### CONSIDERATIONS on the State of the *British* Trade, &c.

From Tuesday, July 14. to Thursday, July 16. 1713.

*Trading Nations ought never to Prohibit the Export of their own Manufactures.*

*Manufacturing is the Bread of the Poor; to limit the Sale of the Goods they make, is to take their Bread from them.*

*No Nation but England ever practise such a piece of Folly.*

*By this the Dutch have been our Partners in the Trade, and at last our Masters.*

*Also the French have been put upon Manufacturing among themselves.*

*Though private Persons have been so weak to approve this, the Parliament, it is hoped, will be Wiser.*

**I**T is a Maxim founded in the Reason of Trade, that Manufacturing Nations ought never to Prohibit the Exportation of their own Manufactures to any Place whatsoever. Importations may be Prohibited as Emergency may offer, and sometimes are made necessary by the Circumstances of Trade, but Exportations never. Whatever England sends abroad, which is of the Produce or the Labour of her own People, is her Gain in the general Ballance of the Kingdoms Commerce; for the encrease of which profitable Labour, the Exportations of those Goods which her People make ought to be made as extensive as possible; and to have all the Encouragement that can be given it: The Dutch observe this Maxim very strictly, and the French have practised it in their Trade with us, from the beginning of the War; for when we Prohibited our Trade with them in general, as well Exports as Imports, they took effectual Care not to hinder the Export to us of their Wine and Brandy, wrought Silks, Paper, Linnen, or any thing else which Employed their People, and consumed the Native Produce of their Country.

It would be hard to find an Example of any Trading Nation in the World, who have Interdicted their own Commerce, as England has done, and put a stop, by Prohibitory Laws, to the Exportation of their own Manufactures. It seems something unnatural in Trade to do so; for as the Labour of the People is their Subsistence, the stopping the Exportation of the Goods produced by that Labour, is so far taking their Subsistence from the said People. It would be needless to enter into Arguments to confirm this Note, or to

aggravate the Absurdity of such a practise; nor shall this Paper make any Satyrs, however just: Those who look back upon those Transactions, when Foreign Councils too evidently influenced us to the prejudice of Trade, will easily find out the Reason of these Proceedings.

But this may be call'd to mind now, from the Experience of our Sufferings in Trade, and the Reflection will be found both just and useful for our present Information: That which has given the French the Opportunity and Advantage of entering upon such Undertakings in Manufactures, as they have done, and making such Progress and Advances in them, as they have made, to the Disadvantage of the English Woollen Manufactures, has been the several general Prohibitions of Commerce which have been made in England, Prohibiting thereby our own Manufactures from going into France. The People who made these Prohibitions, seem to be the same, and in the same Interest with those, who now Object against the liberty of Exporting our Manufactures thither, which has been obtain'd by the present Treaty; by which doughty Atchievement they have the Honour of being the Cause of the Objection which they raise; and so they support the Mistake, which they would now make, by the Mistake they have already made.

Prohibitions of Trade have been indeed too much the Practice among us, and we are not without some Instances, where those Prohibitions even of Foreign Importations have been fatal to the Exportation of our Woollen Manufactures; and these are mention'd here, because





Because when this has been discover'd and represented to the Parliament, they have made it a Rule to them, carefully to rescind and repeal these Prohibitions; which, if it is wonderful, should not still continue in force.

This was exemplified from the late severe Prohibition of Bone-Lace from the Spanish Netherlands, which occasion'd the Flemings to make a Prohibition of the English Woollen Manufacture in all that Country; upon which the Legislature forthwith, being convinc'd of the Mistake, repealed that Prohibition, that our Woollen Manufactures might have an open Market in Flanders, &c. as usual. The like Case happen'd in the Prohibiting the Exporting our undyed White Cloths, which are made in Gloucestershire, about Cirencester, and those Parts; upon which, the Sale of those Cloths received a great Check, and the Manufacture was in danger of being ruin'd: Whereupon the Parliament found it convenient to allow again the Exportation of White Cloths, by an Act of the very last Session of the present Parliament.

Thus, upon all Occasions, the Legislature has been careful to remove every Obstruction, and repeal all Prohibitions, even of foreign Goods, which were found to lessen the Consumption of our Woollen Manufacture in foreign Parts; which Proceeding, was doubtless founded upon this Principle, (viz.) That it is the undoubted Interest of every Trading Nation, to promote, as much as possible, the Sale of their own Manufactures, and to make them as extensive as may be.

Upon what Principle then those People acted, who have for many Years past limited their own Trade, and prohibited their own Manufactures from being Exported, is a Mystery which, it must be confessed, it will be hard to explain, and a Proceeding which no Man has yet been able to give a Reason for.

How that little Sale of our Woollen Manufactures, which has been in France even by Necessity, and as it might be said, against our Will, has been carried on by the Dutch, may be worth enquiring into; and how they have thereby been made Partners in our Trade, nay in some respects it might be said, have been Masters of our Manufacture: It is an Unhappiness, that any among us should be willing to have it so: But surely they cannot expect to bring the Nation in general to be of that Opinion.

It requires some Temper to speak patiently of those Politicks, which during the Twenty Years last past, have thought fit to Encourage, as it has been called, our Woollen Manufactures, by Prohibiting their Exportation to France; when, on the contrary, the only way to extend their Consumption, had been to Encourage their being Exported, as much as possible, to all Parts of the World: But these People shut themselves out voluntarily from the whole Dominions of the French King, where so great a Quantity of Woollen Manufactures used to be received. This was acting so opposite to the true Interest of our Trade, that nothing could have been a greater Blow to it in its kind: From this

ill guess in Trade, all those Things, which are so much pleaded now, especially so much of them as are true, relating to the French, being fallen into our Woollen Manufactures, do proceed.

It is presumed, had not these Prohibitions begun here, the French would never have made several of their last Advances in Burthening our Manufactures with extraordinary Duties, much less with that Edict of 1701. which was mentioned in the *MERCATOR*, (No. 13.) seeing the Progress, which they had by that time arrived to in the Woollen Manufacture, was so little, as would not have permitted them to be without the English Goods; but when for Twelve Years, during the first War, our Prohibition of Exporting our own Manufactures to France, had made such a scarcity among them, as had not only obliged them to make them at home, but Encouraged those, who undertook it to go on, because of the good Price they found at the Market: They obtained, in time, a greater Knowledge and Capacity in the said Manufactures, than they had before: Tho' struggling still with the want of Materials, they never could, nor can, if our Wooll may be with-held from them, arrive to such a Perfection, as to match the English Manufactures, without the help of Immoderate Customs: And therefore the French Manufacturers wisely Represented to the French King, as was mentioned *MERCATOR*, (No. 14.) that if those Immoderate Customs were taken off, and the English Manufactures were admitted into France upon the foot of the Tariff of 1664. the French Manufactures would all be Ruined.

Those People then, who argue against the present Treaty of Commerce, from the French being able to supply themselves with Woollen Manufactures without us, commit a double Mistake; FIRST, in endeavouring, by continuing the Prohibition in France, to push on and encourage the French, in their said Manufacturing; which, letting in our Manufactures among them upon easy Duties, would in time destroy: And SECONDLY, in making use of that for an Argument against the present Treaty of Commerce, and against making its Articles effectual, which is the strongest Reason for it; and for which Reason, every true Brittain, who is friendly to the Trade and Improvement of the Nation, is or will be, when he is farther enlightened, zealous for the perfecting the said Treaty.

But while we are so possess'd with PARTY-RAGE, as to be able to make Bonfires and Illuminations for Joy at the Delay of that Encouragement, which our Manufactures so much want, and refusing to give God Thanks for the Blessings of Peace and Trade, we are also capable of continuing longer under the Delusions, which have been so much our Misfortune; and so long this Paper will, it is hoped, be profitably employ'd, if not to lessen the Evil, yet at least to prevent its spreading farther; not questioning but the Legislature will be pleas'd to RECONSIDER this Affair in a proper Season, and prevent the final Loss of so gainful a Trade, which some People, to carry on a Party-Cause, are so willing to run the hazard of.



LONDON: Printed for BENJ. TOOKE, at the Temple-Gate; and JOHN BARBER, on Lambeth-Hill. (Price 3 Half-pence.)